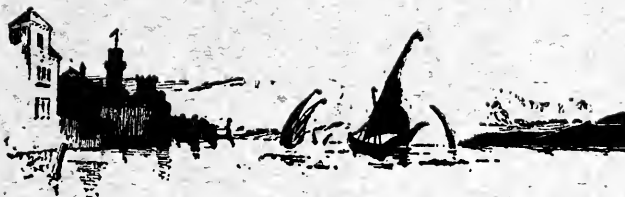


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JACK'S WIFE ARRIVES

—BY—
ALICE CHAPLIN



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Franklin, Ohio

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Denver, Colo.

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Jack's Wife Arrives

A Lively Farce-Comedy
in Two Acts

By

ALICE CHAPLIN

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Eldridge Entertainment House

PRICE 35 CENTS

PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE
Franklin, Ohio also Denver, Colo.

CHARACTERS

MRS. FOLLETT

DOROTHY FOLLETT

MRS. ROSALIE FOLLETT

MRS. JACK FOLLETT

PHILIP HAINES

ELISE, the French maid.

SCENES

ACT I.—Sitting room at the Follett's.

ACT II.—Same scene, fifteen minutes later.

Setting: Room with three doors: Center Back (C. B.) leading to hall; one on R. wall center, leading to the dining room; one on back wall, right of C. B. door. At extreme left of stage is divan facing left wall where there is a fireplace. Divan piled with cushions. Back stage, left of C. B. door is trunk standing with cover up. At right of closet door (which is door R. of C. B. door) is small table with telephone and later is where Jack's picture is placed. Chairs arranged tastily around R. and L. front. Newspaper on table.

Costumes, modern; simple.

Time, the present.

DEC 30 '22 © C. I. D.

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Jack's Wife Arrives

ACT I.

(As curtain rises, Dorothy, the young lady of the house, is standing beside trunk. Mother is standing to right, somewhat disheveled, shaking out pair of trousers.)

DOROTHY—(glancing up from trunk) That's the last of Jack's things, thank goodness.

(Mother gives trousers a violent shake. Sighs heavily.)

DOROTHY—(leaning over trunk) Except this. (Lifts out photograph of Jack) Jack, just before he went to war. Shall we keep it?

MOTHER—(Snatches it out of her hand.) Keep it! Dorothy, have you lost your senses? (Drops trousers, gazes fondly at picture, starts over to telephone table; trips over trousers, is assisted by Dorothy.) We shall certainly keep it—dear Jack. (Places picture on table near phone.)

DOT—(Looks at mother as though weary of the subject, pushes trunk cover down, picks up trousers, goes toward closet.) I'll hang these in here. (Opens closet, hangs trousers and comes out.) Now, let's have the janitor take the trunk to the trunk room. There is no use in keeping such morbid mementoes around. We'll have Mary attend to it.

MOTHER—(Slumps into chair right front, dejectedly.) Mary! (Sniffs.)

DOT—(looking anxiously around) Where IS Mary?

MOTHER—(wearily) Gone.

DOT—What? Gone? You mean for good? That she has deliberately left us?

MOTHER—Uh-huh. (*Rocks disconsolately.*)

DOT—(*goes forward*) Without a word of warning?

MOTHER—Oh, she gave me plenty of WORDS before she left.

DOT—Why should she have gone so suddenly? What happened? (*Walks to L. front.*)

MOTHER—Mary has always reminded me that she was engaged as my maid, not our waitress. I've told you before, Dorothy, that she has made life miserable for me every time you've given a luncheon party and asked her to serve. That's nothing new. When I told her this morning—

DOT—(*sitting L.*) —that I was to have six friends for tea, she just threw up the job! Well, she wasn't any good, anyway. Let her go! (*Rises and strides further left.*)

MOTHER—(*whining*) But I do SO need a maid Dorothy.

DOT—You'll have one. (*Goes to telephone, bumps into trunk on way across stage, exasperated.*) And here's the trunk still with us! I'll have to send word to the janitor myself. * (*Takes up receiver.*) Manhattan 4082.

MOTHER—Why do you move so fast? You take my breath away. You are more of a Tom-boy than your brother, Jack.

DOT—(*in telephone*) Yes. Mrs. Wilson? This is Mrs. Follett's home. We need a maid for mother, and we need her quick.

MOTHER—(*whining*) I won't have ANY maid she may see fit to send.

DOT—(*in telephone*) Why, I don't know. We never have had any experience with a real French maid.

MOTHER—(*running to Dot, pulling at her arm*) Don't let it be a French one, Dorothy. I couldn't stand a

foreigner, with all her jabbering, around the house. Please—

DOT—Sh! (*in telephone.*) That sounds promising. A good disposition is so essential. By the way, will she wait on table occasionally? Just when I have my little dinner parties?

MOTHER—(*going back wearily to chair*) You'll have to give them up, or I'll have to give up my maid. No girl is good for the two jobs, I know. (*Sits.*)

DOT—(*in telephone*) That's great! Oh, yes, we want her immediately. Tell her there will be six extra for supper tonight. All she needs to do is serve. —All right. Thank you so much. (*Hangs receiver, turns to mother.*) That's settled. (*Goes to L.*)

MOTHER—Will she be a nice maid?

DOT—Mrs. Wilson says so—very thorough and anxious to serve.

MOTHER—I hope she is not going to be French.

DOT—She is, already. Well, why not? (*As mother throws up hands.*) French maids are really the best kind to have.

MOTHER—For a person who is fussy about her clothes—yes. But I am not stylish. I don't want to be. And she will make fun of me.

DOT—(*laughs, goes to mother and starts to arrange the locks which have fallen on forehead.*) I wouldn't blame her for laughing at you now, Mother, your hair is a wreck.

MOTHER—Don't pull. I hate to have my hair pulled.

DOT—I'll go gently. I'm glad she's French, and I hope she understands all about French styles. You do need a little prinking.

MOTHER—But I don't want to prink. There's no use in dolling myself up any more.

DOT—Why?

MOTHER—Women only dress to attract the men. I

have no men to attract.

DOT—(*laughing*) Nonsense! Women dress to show off before other women.

MOTHER—That's not the way with me. Your dear father used to be so pleased with my pretty gowns—and Jack! Do you remember how Jack used to come in and say, "Hie, ma, don't you look swell!" (*Sighs.*) Now that your father's dead, and Jack's dead, I don't seem to care how I look. (*Weeps.*)

DOT—Now, mother, don't cry about Jack. Your eyes will be swollen and red.

MOTHER—(*Rises and flounces to L.*) I don't care a rap what my eyes look like. When I want to cry for my dear boy, I'll cry, regardless of looks. All you think of nowadays is LOOKS. I hate them.

DOT—(*Goes to mother, puts arms around her*) Now dearie, I didn't mean to seem heartless, but you know yourself that fretting isn't going to do any good. Let me fix your skirt. It's wrong end to. (*Arranges skirt.*) You mustn't think I don't love Jack. I do. He was my only brother and when news came that he was killed in that horrible battle, I—well—you know how we both felt. (*Sighs, then arouses self.*) There, that looks better. Come sit down. (*Leads her back to chair R.*) Jack's been dead over a year now, and I do think that we ought to live in the present, and for the future, not all in the past.

MOTHER—I'll never cease to mourn him. (*Is seated.*)

DOT—I don't ask you to. All I ask is for you not to be so selfish in your love. You might let me give you another son to love—to take care of you.

MOTHER—Now, Dorothy!

DOT—Mother, I love Philip. He wants me to marry him, and I want to, too, only you won't let me.

MOTHER—I don't want any more men in the family. We've always had such bad luck with our men.

DOT—Won't you even meet Philip? Let him come and talk things over with you.

MOTHER—I won't see him. I don't want to, and I won't!

DOT—Am I to be an old maid all my life just because you're too busy moaning over the dead, to care for the happiness of the living?

MOTHER—Now, Dorothy, why can't you wait a few years, until my grief grows less. Then I may be willing to meet your sweetheart.

DOT—Wait? Why, we've already waited a year, and instead of your prejudices growing less, they have increased. All I've heard is "Jack this and Jack that." It could just as easily be "Phil this and Phil that."

MOTHER—You are very unkind to me this morning. (*Pushes her glasses on top of head and wipes eyes.*) What with the maid leaving, and the ordeal of a new one coming, and your party tonight, you might forget for a while this Philip Haines who wants to marry you against my will.

DOT—Very well. I won't speak about him again today. But something has got to be done. Philip won't wait forever on me, and I don't intend to take a chance on losing him. So there! (*Gets paper from table, strides over to divan, and sits with back to mother. Opens paper with jerk and reads it rapidly, turning pages over noisily.*)

MOTHER—(*looking over at her timidly*) If Jack were only here!

(*Dot sniffs, snaps paper as she turns page.*)

MOTHER—I suppose you think your Philip is handsome, but he can't be better looking than my Jack was.

(*Dot continues reading paper, with shrug of shoulders, suddenly becoming interested.*)

MOTHER—They say it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all, but—

DOT—(*leaps from divan, eyes on paper*) MOTHER!

MOTHER—(*frightened by cry, leaps up on chair, holding up skirts*) Where are they? (*Looks down for mice.*) Have they got loose again? Scare the mice away.

DOT—(*going to her and helping her down, still holding paper*) Mary caught two of them in the trap last night. I didn't mean to scare you, but I couldn't help screaming. Here is the most astounding news! Read—here.

MOTHER—(*who has got down from chair with Dot's help, begins to look around for her glasses.*) I can't see without my glasses. Where did I put them, Dorothy?

DOT—(*once more interested in paper, reads it to self*) (*After a while.*) Have you had them this morning? (*Continues to read.*)

MOTHER—(*turning everything upside down*) Of course I had them this morning. I had them on when I came into this room not fifteen minutes ago. Dorothy, help me to find them!

DOT—(*Looks up from paper at mother, laughs, goes to her and takes glasses from her head.*) There you are! They were on all the time. (*Mother sits exhausted in chair at C. F.*) I'll read this to you anyway. This was evidently written by a reporter who met the Liverpool steamer Oceanic, when it docked this morning. "Among those arriving on the Oceanic from Liverpool, was Mrs. Jack Follett, wife of the hero who gave his life for his country at —"

MOTHER—(*grips Dot*) Wait! I don't understand. Wife?

DOT—You'll understand when you've heard more. "Mrs. Follett, who married her young husband a few days before his tragic end, has kept the marriage secret until now. When asked for the reason, she admitted that pride had prevented her letting Mr. Follett's people know that she was Jack's widow. The Herman Folletts of

New York are an old, established family of considerable wealth and prestige." Ahum! "This fact, the wife of young Follett did not know until after the marriage. When she became his widow, she determined not to turn to his people for help, because she feared that they would think she had married for money only.

MOTHER—Jack's wife! Jack's wife, and we never knew he was married!

DOT—(*Reads*) "During the past year, Mrs. Follett has spent her time in England, near her home in Stratford-on-Avon, as nurse in a large hospital. Feeling, however, that she might be doing an injustice to her husband's people by keeping the marriage hidden from them any longer, she finally decided to cross the ocean to meet them. She hopes to be able to arrange an interview immediately. Mrs. Jack Follett—or as she signs herself—Mrs. Rosalie Follett, is an English—"

MOTHER—Don't read any more. I don't want to hear what she looks like, or anything more about her—yet. I just want to think. It's hardly believable that Jack would marry without our knowledge.

DOT—I don't believe he intended to. His last letter to us said that he had good news, and I firmly believe that he wrote another letter that we never received.—I'm glad he married; glad that there's someone else in the world that belonged to him, that we can feel belongs to us, too.

MOTHER—You are right. Of course you are right. We'll have someone to take Jack's place. I wonder if she is sweet and good. She must be, if Jack picked her out. (*Rises.*) I'm going to arrange his room for her at once. If she comes, we'll insist upon her staying. (*Starts off R.*)

DOT—And, mother. (*Goes close to her.*) If she does come, and you like her—won't you give Phil a chance?

MOTHER—Don't talk Phil to me now. I'm too excited about Jack's wife. (*Exit R.*)

DOT—(*looks after her in exasperation, then gets paper which she has dropped on floor, picks it up, folds it and puts it on table. Walks toward divan to straighten pillows.*) Jack's wife! I hope she does come. (*She pounds pillows.*)

ROSE—(*opening door C. B., and putting her head in a bit.*) May I come in?

DOT—(*turning toward door, eyes wide*) Why—it can't be—you can't be—

ROSE—(*entering and coming forward*) You won't mind my intruding like this, will you? I was so afraid you wouldn't want me here, so when I saw the door open a crack, I—

DOT—(*seizing her arm*) Not want you! Why, I haven't words enough to express my joy in seeing my new sister.

ROSE—Your new sister? I don't know what you mean—I—

DOT—Of course you don't understand, until I explain. I'm Jack's sister, Dorothy. You are Jack's wife, so, of course, we are sisters, too.

ROSE—(*thoughtfully*) Oh!

DOT—It was very foolish of you not to have come before, just as soon as Jack died. Why didn't you?

ROSE—(*hesitating*) Why—I had my work—over there, and besides, how was I to know that you wanted me?

DOT—You should have realized how terribly lonesome we were here, just we two women. But you are here now. Take off your hat. You've got to stay all the time. Live here, you know. (*Takes her hat, puts it in closet R. of C. B. door, comes forward again.*) You will, won't you?

ROSE—If you really want me.

DOT—Really want you? Never question us again. (*Gives her a hug.*) Of course we want you. (*Looks at her affectionately.*) Your name is Rosalie, isn't it?

ROSE—Yes, Rosalie.

DOT—That's such a pretty name, and you are pretty, too. I don't wonder Jack loved you. (*Looks around.*) Where's your baggage?

ROSE—(*embarrassed again*) Why—I—er—I didn't think I had better have it brought here yet. I wanted to make sure of my welcome.

DOT—Then I'll telephone for it. We'll have it here at once. (*Goes to telephone.*)

ROSE—(*Puts out her hand to stop her.*) Don't!—Please let me do that. I'd really rather.

DOT—But you don't know the ropes. Things are done differently in New York than they are in Stratford.

ROSE—Not so very different. I'm used to taking care of myself. Won't I have to describe the boxes and trunks? There is so much detail.

DOT—(*going away from phone*) You are right. Your coming here so unexpectedly has sort of gone to my head, I guess. (*Laughs.*) I'll leave you here to phone, while I slip upstairs to tell mother that Jack's wife has arrived. Then join me in the kitchen, will you, Rose? I'm expecting guests, for supper and you'll help me out, won't you?

ROSE—I'd love to.

DOT—I want you to feel like one of the family right off. Don't hesitate to come out. (*Exit R.*)

ROSE—(*Waits till Dot is gone, then looks around cautiously, off C. B. door, then off R. Goes on tiptoe to phone.*) Bowling Green 2563. (*Looks around anxiously, while waiting.*) Hullo. Is this the Times-Ledger office? I want to speak to the day editor, Mr. Colson. Hurry, please. (*Looks around.*) Mr. Colson? I wish to speak to Mr. Colson and no one else. Tell him it's— (A

door slams off C. B. Footsteps approach. Rose drops receiver, and runs off R. just as C. B. opens a crack.)

PHIL—(a large-framed young man, dressed as a girl, looking ridiculous, peeks in to see if the way is clear, enters carefully, makes grotesque face, as though to register relief, caution and cunning.) Cat's away, mice will play! Here's hoping! (Enters fully. Pulls dress up above ankles. Walks around gingerly, taking long strides. Looks off R. Turns back to center, sees paper folded on table and picks it up.) Hullo! Jack's wife? This sounds interesting. I'll have to look this through. (Strides cautiously over to divan; sits; pulls up trousers man-fashion, stretches out legs. Shakes out paper. As divan is placed, his back is partly toward C. of stage, and from the right only the head and neck are to be seen. He wears a girl's hat and has false wig.)

MOTHER—(Enter R. Sees what looks like a girl reading paper. Goes quickly and silently over to Phil. Throws her arm around his neck and places cheek near his.) Jack's wife! My darling!

PHIL—(dropping paper) Oh, I say—

MOTHER—I'm so glad you came home to us at last, darling. (Phil tries to hide his face from her.) We shall love you as dearly as we loved Jack, for you are his choice and we shall abide by it. You will be our own little daughter from now on.

PHIL—Oh, I say, this is so sudden.

MOTHER—Have you a cold, dear? Your voice sounds so queer—so hoarse.

PHIL—Oh, yes. It gets that way sometimes, especially since I've been living in London. The fog, you know. I was hoping that when I landed in Amercia the hoarseness, due to the London fog, would go.

MOTHER—We shall take good care of you, dear. We shall see that your natural sweet voice returns. (Turns to Center.) When Dorothy told me you were here—

PHIL—(*leaping from seat, and turning*) She did, did she?

MOTHER—(*startled, looking up at him*) Why—why—how tall you are, daughter!

PHIL—(*trying to make himself shorter*) Oh, yes, I was born this way—that is—I grew this way. But you mustn't mind my height. I like to sit most of the time, and you won't notice it then.

MOTHER—I suppose it's all right. Jack was six feet and two inches, in his stocking feet. He'd naturally want a tall wife.

PHIL—Oh, yes—sure—that's it. We were just like twins.

MOTHER—English girls are said to be mannish. I'll get used to you soon, dear. You mustn't mind me now, if I seem to act a little strangely. American girls aren't a bit like you, but I AM going to love you, for Jack's sake.

PHIL—(*going to her, his voice softened*) Why, you dear mother, you are being awfully good to me. I'd give a good deal if you WERE my mother-in-law.

MOTHER—But I am already! Oh, don't tell me that Jack wasn't legally married!

PHIL—He was married all right. Don't worry on that score. (*Bell off back rings.*)

MOTHER—There's someone at the door, and we have no maid. (*Goes to R.*) Dorothy, will you go to the door?

DOT—(*off R.*) My hands are covered with dough.

MOTHER—Then I'll go. You'll excuse me just a moment, dear? I'll be back presently. (*Goes off with smile C. B.*)

(*The moment she goes, Phil picks up his skirts and looks for a place to run. Starts off R.; hears voices. He starts C. B.; hears voices. After a wild run around, he finally leaps into Jack's trunk which is standing L. of door, and lets the cover down on it, just as C. B. door opens and Mrs. Follett appears.*)

MOTHER—Come right in—er—what shall I call you?

ELISE—(*entering with suit case*) Elise, madame. (*Pronounced A-leez.*) Zat ees my name, Elise. (*Places bag on trunk.*)

MOTHER—I hope we are going to like each other. You have certainly come when I am most in need of a maid.

ELISE—(*with French accent*) Zat ees very fortunate. I am only too happy to please Madame. Shall I begin my duties toute-de-suite? Your scarf, it ees very deshevelle. I will arrange it—so. (*Business.*) And, here, a lock of Madame's hair that insists upon flying loosely. Madame has very soft pretty hair.

MOTHER—It's such a comfort to hear you talk like that, for to tell the truth, the idea of having a French maid frightened me. (*Elise takes off her hat and places it on trunk. Takes out apron and maid's cap from suit case, and closes case. Puts on cap and apron.*) I haven't wanted to dress myself up, since my dear son, Jack, died.

ELISE—(*Sees photograph on table.*) Ah! Ees eet the handsome young man whose picture stands upon the table? (*Takes up picture.*) He is a good man, madame.

MOTHER—He was, indeed, the best son a woman could have had. (*Wipes eyes.*)

ELISE—(*going to her and affectionately patting her shoulder*) You should not weep. Where he is now, there is no trouble, no sickness, no strife. Come, madame, do not be triste. You will let me— (*Happens to see cover of trunk rising and her bag falling off.*) —you will let me— (*Bag goes on floor, she leaves Mother, picks up suit case and puts it on trunk with bang. Goes back to Mother. Leads her to comfortable chair R. C.*) —you will let me lead you to a comfortable chair. And zen I will tidy up zee room (*keeping eye on trunk*) for zee company zat comes tonight.

MOTHER—This is such a luxury—not to have to worry about anything.

ELISE—Oh, Madame, you are very careless. Your shoestrings! Lala! Suppose you haf fall and hurt yourself! (*Ties string. Keeps looking at trunk.*)

MOTHER—I was so excited, Elise. I couldn't wait to come downstairs hardly.

ELISE—(*Rises, and taking duster to trunk, seems to be having fun watching it.*) What excited Madame?

MOTHER—Jack's wife.

ELISE—Oh-h-h! So zee handosme young son, he marry?

MOTHER—Yes, and we never knew it till today. Think of it! Over a year after he died before we hear of his wife!

ELISE—And now—?

MOTHER—The wife has come to live with us—is here in this house now—was here in this room a moment ago. (*Rises.*) I wonder where she went.

ELISE—Not very far, I am sure.

MOTHER—I want you to meet her, Elise. She's odd, very odd, but I know I am going to love my new daughter. (*Goes to door R.*) (*Elise looks closer around the trunk, when Mother isn't looking.*) Dorothy.

DOT—(*outside*) Yes, mother.

MOTHER—Is our new daughter with you?

DOT—Yes, Rosalie is here. We'll be with you directly.

MOTHER—(*to Elise*) Her name is Rosalie. You will call her Mrs. Jack, but I shall call her— (*Has wandered over to L. of stage, nearer Elise.*)

DOT—(*entering from R.*) Here we are, mother. Come in, Rose.

(*Enter Rose. Stands at threshold.*)

MOTHER—(*Approaches her, bewildered. Dot crosses to L. near Elise.*) Why—why—you are not Jack's wife!

DOT—Of course she is, Mother. She's Rosalie Fol-

lett. (*Turns to Elise.*) And you are—?

(*Mother touches Rose as though she were made of something fragile. Rose comes farther into room.*)

ELISE—(*to Dot*) I am zee new French maid, mam-selle. I am Elise.

DOT—You are a welcome sight, I'm sure. Thank goodness, things are beginning to straighten out. After you've seen to mother's comforts, I wish you'd help me set the table— (*Voice drifts off in a whisper to Elise, as Mother, still staring unbelieving at Rose, speaks.*)

MOTHER—Have you—have you always looked like this?

ROSE—Of course I have, Mrs. Follett. I couldn't very well change my appearance.

MOTHER—But I—but you were six feet tall only a few minutes ago.

DOROTHY—(*turning abruptly to mother*) Mother, don't be ridiculous. She is our own dear little Rose, and we wouldn't change her for the world. (*Embraces her.*)

MOTHER—But your voice—your London fog voice—

ROSE—I have only one voice—the one I am using.

DOT—(*feeling her mother's head and shaking her own*) Go upstairs and lie down. This excitement has proven too much for you.

MOTHER—I'm all right, Dorothy. I saw Jack's wife here a few minutes ago, and talked to her, and she WAS tall and her voice WAS heavy and— (*Begins to weep.*)

ELISE—Perhaps Madame mistake someone else for her son's wife.

MOTHER—(*hysterically*) If I did, where is she, who is she, what is she?

DOROTHY—(*feeling of her pulse*) We'll settle this mystery later. Mother, dear, let Elise take you upstairs for a rest, while Rosalie and I set the table and prepare for our guests. (*Mother protests.*) There's a dear, good mother. (*Gives her gentle hug.*) Please go.

MOTHER—I'll go, but you needn't think I don't know what I'm talking about, for I do! (*Exit R., with Elise, sputtering about knowing her own mind.*)

DOT—(*looking after her mother, then turning to Rose*) Poor mother! Well, we've got to get busy with those scalloped oysters.

ROSE—I'll be with you soon, dear, after I've tried the telephone again. The line was busy before.

DOT—All right. I'll wait. (*Sits.*)

ROSE—(*looking at her anxiously, nervously*) Please don't wait for me. I wouldn't want to be the cause of a delayed supper, and those oysters ought to be baking now.

DOT—I suppose you are right. (*Rises.*) But I hate to be leaving you alone so much. (*Exit R.*)

ROSE—(*As before, she looks around cautiously before speaking in phone.*) Bowling Green 2563. —Is this the Times-Ledger? I want to speak to Mr. Colson, the day editor, at once. Tell him I have very important news for him. (*Enter Elise. Stands at R. listening.*) Mr. Colson? (*Rose looks up and sees Elise. She puts down receiver with bang. Rises haughtily.*) What are you doing here?

ELISE—(*Comes forward. Saunters to L.*) Ah, Madame, zat ees what I would ask of you. What are YOU doing here?

ROSE—I am Mrs. Jack Follett. I have a right to be here.

ELISE—SO! Meeses Jack Follett arrives today from Liverpool on zee great steamer—so madame tells me. Did you arrive comme cela?

ROSE—That is my business, and you will do well to let me attend to it. (*Starts off R.*)

ELISE—Just one moment. Eet is my business, too, because already I love the dear Madame, and would not have her disappointed. I haf seen you before. I cannot

just place you—but I know it ees in America, for I did not come off zee great steamer this morning.

ROSE—You are impertinent. I shall see that you are instantly discharged.

ELISE—(*with eyes opening in satisfaction*) Ah, eet has come to me! The memory! At Mlle. Traymor's home, just before Mlle. married her English duke. I was her maid, and you—

ROSE—(*tapping her shoe impatiently*) Well?

ELISE—You were zee young lady from zee—er—let me think—zee Times-Ledger office to gif her an interview. I remember it all now, how you ask and wrote zee questions. You see, Mlle., you could not ver' well be nursing zee seeck people in England, and getting the society gossip in America at zee same time.

ROSE—Elise, I am going to tell you the truth.

ELISE—(*smiling derisively*) Ees that so?

ROSE—It really doesn't make much difference what I have done—whether reporting or nursing, my identity isn't changed. I'm Rosalie Follett, Jack's wife, just the same.

ELISE—Ah?

ROSE—The only thing of importance is that I came to America immediately after Jack's death, and found work in a newspaper office here. At first I didn't intend to let his parents know about me, but I became lonesome—you know how it is, when one is far from home and friends, so I decided to look them up. But, thinking they would never forgive me for not coming to them sooner, I just made up this story about coming over on the Oceanic, had it put in the papers, and, well—you understand the rest.

ELISE—Oui, Mlle., I understand—perhaps better than you think.

ROSE—What do you mean?

ELISE—Oh, nothing much, Mlle. (*Wanders over to*

R.) Mlle. Follett is calling you. Would you keep her waiting too long?

ROSE—(*glares angrily at Elise.*) Take care. Don't go too far! (*Whisks past her and goes out R.*)

ELISE—(*Laughs as she watches her off, then turns quickly, tiptoes to trunk and quickly turns key. She bends low, so that the one inside can hear.*) Now, you burglar, you thief, you whatever-you-call-yourself, what have you got to say for yourself now? (*Listens. Silence.*) Will you not speak? But I know you are inside this trunk, and zere you will stay till I unlock the hasp. (*Laughs.*) Who are you?—Are you a burglar? (*Walks away from trunk with shrug of shoulders.*) Oh, well, if you will not answer I will call the police. (*Goes to phone then has new thought. Chuckles.*) No, a better way I haf. (*Goes to door R.*) Mlle. Dorothy, just one minute, please. (*To trunk.*) I will settle your hash, you whatever-you-are.

DOT—(*entering R.*) What do you want, Elise? I'm terribly busy.

ELISE—Sh! Sh! (*Pulls her to center of stage. In warning whisper.*) Mamselle, zere ees a thief in this house!

(*Dot cries in alarm and turns to run out.*)

ELISE—(*Pulls her back.*) Sh! Do not alarm your dearest mama. You and I can manage tres bien.

DOT—But I don't understand. Where is the thief?

ELISE—In zere. (*Points to trunk.*)

DOT—(*eyes open in horror*) In Jack's trunk! Why is it there? Why doesn't it come out?

ELISE—Because I haf zee key. See, (*Holds up key.*) I will gif it to you.

DOT—No, no. I don't want it. I wouldn't know what to do with a thief.

ELISE—Listen! In zee kitchen are tongs and poker which I will bring in here, and stand ready to use on the

thief's head when you unlock the hasp. Zen, when zee thief is uncovered and in our power, we can talk business.

DOT—(*nervously*) He might shoot.

ELISE—Oh, no—I tink not. It is very dangerous to shoot. Besides, I will stand between you and him—

DOT—I'm not such a coward as that. Give me the key.

ELISE—I shall be gone but a minute, Mamselle. (*Goes to C. B.*) Ees there a cleaver? Zat will look murderous. When I swing it the thief will be too frightened to move. (*Exit C. B.*)

DOT—(*looking doubtfully at the trunk*) We really ought to call in the police. What can two girls do with a desperate man? (*Hesitates a moment.*) I'm going to. (*Goes to telephone, starts to take off receiver, stops.*) Is someone calling me? (*Listens, then goes cautiously to trunk, listens, startled look on face.*) Oh! (*Gets key hurriedly. Unlocks trunk, pulls up cover. She and Phil slowly rise from bent position, staring at each other. Phil is a sight. Hat bedraggled, hair over one eye, his clothes ruffled. His expression one of exhaustion and disgust.*) Phil! (*When they have risen full height, they fall into each other's arms, Phil still in trunk. After embrace, Dot starts laughing, and continues, holding her sides with merriment. Phil is made angry by her ridicule.*)

DOT—Philip Haines! Oh, you do look so funny!

PHIL—That's it! Just like a woman! Go ahead and laugh, when I'm almost dead from suffocation.

DOT—I'm not laughing at you, dear, just at the way you look. You're a scream. (*Goes off in another gale of laughter.*)

PHIL—(*stepping out of trunk with haughty air, pulling up his skirts to do so. He rips off his wig and hat, slams them on floor, takes off his coat, rolls down trousers, then off with skirt, with offended air.*)

DOT—Don't be angry with me, Phil. You'd laugh, yourself, if you could see what a picture you make.

PHIL—Pity you haven't a camera handy to take a snapshot of the monstrosity. (*Still removing clothes.*) Well, the show will be over in a jiffy. (*Dot still laughing when he has everything removed, revealing soft shirt and white flannels underneath, suddenly reaches for Dot and takes her in his arms and kisses her.*) There! You'll pay for that laugh, young lady.

DOT—(*looking into his face*) Tell me, Phil, how did you ever land in Jack's trunk?

PHIL—The wind blew me in and slammed the cover down. (*Leads her forward.*) Sit down, girly, and I'll tell you all about it. Where's your mother?

DOT—Resting. She won't be down for quite a while. Tell me all that's happened. (*Sits C. Phil leans on the arm of her chair.*)

PHIL—Well, a bright idea came to me this morning, when I decided that the time of waiting for you had reached its limit, and whether your mother wished it or not, I was going to make my bow to her and ask her for your hand.

DOT—It's no use, Phil. She won't consent to our marriage.

PHIL—Sis was willing to swap places with me tonight, letting me come in her stead to your supper party. I got out the duds I wore at the college show, and planned to pass myself off as Beatrice Haynes instead of her good-for-nothing brother.

DOT—But why did you come so early? Supper is at six.

PHIL—At the last moment I got cold feet, decided that I'd better put you wise so that you wouldn't give me away by your surprise, at a crucial moment—and so I landed here fifteen minutes ago.

.. DOT—Thank goodness you didn't meet anyone.

PHIL—Didn't meet anyone? Great heavens, but I did! That's what caused the trouble.

DOT—Oh, Phil!

PHIL—I was sitting over there (*points to divan*) all peaceful enough, when a woman threw her arms around my neck, called me her darling—

DOT—(*Rises in alarm.*) Philip! It was Mother!

PHIL—That's what!

DOT—Oh, you HAVE put your feet into a mess now. She will never forgive you. You tried to pass as Jack's wife—

PHIL—Tried? You mean she shoved the load on my shoulders and I couldn't pry it off with a fifty-foot iron bar.

DOT—Well, you passed, anyway. You deceived her. If there's anything in this world she hates, it's deceit. There's no hope of her ever consenting to our marriage now.

PHIL—Nonsense, girlie. She'd never recognize me in this garb as the girl whom she met here a while ago.

DOT—Then you must go at once, for if she sees you here, she will at once associate you with Jack's wife. Do, Phil, please run along. We can plan for a meeting later.

PHIL—Call me up some time this evening, will you?

DOT—I promise. (*Starts to get his clothes, wig, etc., in pile. He goes to R.*) Not that way. Jack's real wife is there.

PHIL—Real wife?

DOT—Don't stop to ask questions now. I'll (*Phil starts toward C. B.*) tell you all about it la—

ELISE—(*out C. B.*) I'm coming, Mamselle. The cleaver it was so hard to find.

DOT—Elise! (*Drops clothes to floor.*) I had forgotten all about her. She mustn't see you, for she'd tell

mother everything. (*Rushes around excitedly.*) You've got to hide quick, Phil. In the closet! (*Throws open door R. of C. B., pushes him in, gets clothes, throws them in after him, closes door just as Elise enters C. B. Dot approaches R. front, tries to look unconcerned.*)

ELISE—I am sorry to be so long time. (*Looks at trunk.*) What is eet I see? Zee trunk it ees open!

DOT—Yes, Elise. It's really a great joke on you. The burglar joke, you know. For there wasn't any burglar after all.

ELISE—What was in the box, Mamselle, for of course there was someone in eet?

DOT—Nothing but the family cat. (*Keeps back to Elise, who stands near trunk. Tries to be calm, but is excited.*) He's always getting into tight places.

ELISE—Zee cat he must be one athelete to push the cover up and down so fashion.

DOT—That's nothing. Tom can do more than that. that.

ELISE—(*Going to trunk, eyes twinkling. She looks at Dot out of the corner of her eye.*) He must have very great beeg black eyes, not zee green cat's eyes—but black eyes that stare and stare—

DOT—I really never noticed Tommy's eyes.

ELISE—And the way he knocks and peek out! La, la, la! (*When Dot isn't looking, she picks out handkerchief from trunk and spreads it out.*) And zee cat, he must be a very wise kitten, to blow hees nose on a big handkerchief. (*Puts hand behind her.*)

DOT—(*turning sharply*) What do you mean?

ELISE—Oh, nothing, Mamselle. I should like to meet Monsieur Le Chat.

(*Bell rings.*)

DOT—The girls at last. And, yet, it's too early for supper. Elise, will you go to the door?

ELISE—(*not wanting to leave*) But, Mamselle—

DOT—Go at once.

ELISE—Certainment, Mamselle, but— (*When Dot points impatiently, she goes C. B.*)

DOT—(*Rushes to closet door, pulls Phil out.*) Quick, you've got to get out of this house at once. Elise has guessed that someone is hiding in this closet. I could tell by her manner, and she'll give you away as sure as fate.

PHIL—You'll not forget your promise to call me up?

DOT—(*excited*) I promise, Philip, dear, please hurry. (*Starts to push him out C. B. Hears voices.*)

ELISE—(*off C. B.*) But you cannot come in. Go away. No, no, no!

PHIL—(*drawing back into center*) I can't go out that way. (*Rushes to R.*)

(*Dot rushes wildly around.*)

MOTHER—(*off R.*) Dorothy, what is all the noise about?

DOT—(*Seizes Phil and prevents him going out R.*) It's mother. You mustn't let her see you.

(*Phil starts to go back to closet.*)

DOT—Not there! Elise will give you away. (*Phil turns to hop into trunk.*) Nor there! (*Dot finally pulls him over to divan, urges him to lie down full length on that. She throws blanket over him, then starts piling cushions on him, throwing them down ruthlessly.*)

PHIL—(*in muffled voice*) Ugh! Have a heart!

(*Elise still chattering out back.*)

DOT—Sh! Don't move.

MOTHER—(*entering from R., with Rose behind her*) My glasses are not in the sewing basket. They must be down here. What is the matter, Dorothy? You look as though you had seen a ghost.

DOT—(*standing near divan, out of breath, ruffled*) There's nothing the matter with me—it's Elise that's

causing all the commotion.

ELISE—(as C. B. door is thrown open) I cannot help it, Madame, I tried to keep her out.

MRS. JACK—(*Pushes Elise aside, and strides down center. Carries suitcase. Mannish type of woman. She drops bag in center, on floor and looks at them all defiantly.*)

ELISE—(*coming forward timidly*) She WOULD come in, although I told her Madame was not at home.

(*Mrs. J. surveys group with lorgnette.*)

DOT—Well?

MOTHER—Why don't you speak? Why are you here? Who are you?

MRS. J.—(*haughtily, distinctly, impressively*) I am Jack's wife.

(*Tableau—Mother falls back into Rose's arms in a faint. Dot throws herself on knees beside divan. Phil puts up his head to have a look at the new wife, Elise looks sharply though surrepticiously at her, while Mrs. Jack stands in center with a smile of haughty complacency on her face.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II.

(*Same scene. Ten minutes later.*)

(*Phil still on divan covered with pillows. Mother sitting right front, having her forehead rubbed by Elise, who stands behind her. Dot is pacing up and down left of stage, looking anxiously at divan from time to time. Nothing is said as curtain rises, but immediately after, Mother heaves a great sigh.*)

MOTHER—And she smokes! Think of it! A daughter of mine smoking cigarettes. Why, she hadn't been in this house five minutes before she began puffing away at those deadly weeds with all the sang froid of an old timer.

ELISE—(*soothingly*) Madame must not disturb herself on that account. Many of zee women of England and on the continent smoke. In my country it is most natural.

MOTHER—Don't tell me that YOU smoke, Elise! Not those horrid coffin nails!

ELISE—Oh, no. I do not care for them. But many French girls do, and English, also.

DOT—Which doesn't excuse Jack's wife one bit. The least she could do is to ask Mother if she minded her smoking. But to walk in here as imperious as a Czarina, demand to be taken to her room, and then to puff out one cigarette after another, is going a little too far. I can't understand why Jack married her.

ELISE—Maybe zere is some mistake. Are you sure she is Jack's wife?

MOTHER—Didn't she say she was?

ELISE—So deed the other young lady.

MOTHER—And so did the London Fog. (*Dot looks anxiously at divan.*) I wonder where she went.

DOT—Whom are you talking about? Now, mother—(*Phil snores. Dot on edge of nerves.*)

MOTHER—(*peevishly*) I didn't dream the young lady. I SAW her. I saw her with my own eyes. (*Phil snores. Dot flustered.*)

DOT—Let's not waste our time discussing that mystery now. We have enough troubles to contend with. If this Englishwoman claims that she is Mrs. Jack Follett, haven't we got to accept her?

ELISE—(*who has been watching Dot with an understanding grin*) Have you made her prove her claim?

DOT—What do you mean—show papers and all that?

ELISE—Oui, Mamselle.

DOT—It won't do any harm to ask her for some papers of identification.

MOTHER—And the other young lady. What does she say?

DOT—We'll have them both in here and get to the bottom of all this mix-up. (*Goes to R.*) Rosalie, will you please come into the sitting room? (*Goes to C. B. door. Calls.*) Mrs. Follett, kindly condescend to come down to the parlor as soon as convenient. (*Comes forward and speaks bitterly.*) See if that will bring her. (*Enter Rose, R.*) We are going to get at the truth or bust. (*Sees Rose.*) Come in, dear. For my part, I'd prefer to accept you as Jack's wife, but you know—

(*Enter Mrs. J. Surveys group through lorgnette.*)

MRS. J.—Are you serving tea? I'd prefer mine with lemon.

MOTHER—Tea? Tea at six in the afternoon?

MRS. J.—Certainly. I am accustomed to my afternoon tea. In fact I expect to have it served to me every afternoon without fail.

MOTHER—(*Riled up. Dot once more anxious about Phil, who snores occasionally.*) Well, it is not going to be served here. I won't allow that English custom to be practiced here. I have always opposed eating between meals, and don't intend at my time of life to make any changes. At six-thirty supper will be served, and I refuse to have our appetites ruined by a cup of tea.

MRS. J.—I prefer the tea, and let the appetite go hang.

MOTHER—(*weeping*) Now, you are even swearing.

MRS. J.—(*wearily, half under her breath*) Oh, Lord!

MOTHER—(*stirred to anger*) Well, if you feel that way about it, your tea will have to go hang.

DOT—(*shocked*) Mother!

MOTHER—(*defiantly*) We have friends coming to supper, and Elise has all she can do attending to them and me, without serving tea in between whiles.

DOT—There will be no guests tonight. When Mrs.

Jack arrived I realized that we just couldn't straighten matters out in time to receive the girls, so I just called off the party. We are all a little upset, mother dear. Won't you let us have tea, just for once? Elise, you'll help us out. And it will do you a world of good yourself, mother.

MOTHER—Very well. For just this one occasion.

ELISE—I will go, Madame. (*Exit R. with slight bow.*)

DOT—Please sit down, Mrs. Jack. (*Mrs. J. starts to walk over to divan. Dot, nervous, stops her.*) Oh, not there. Over here, where we can see each other plainly. (*Leads her to chair front of divan on left. Rose and Mother R. of stage, Mother nearer front.*) This is how matters stand. (*Dot addresses group from center, standing.*) Someone married my brother Jack, over a year ago. Rosalie claims to be his wife, and you (*to Mrs. J.*) claim to be his wife. I am sure that my brother did not commit bigamy, so—only one of you is telling the truth. Which one?

BOTH—I am.

DOT—(*to Rose*) You swear that you married Jack?

ROSE—Would I be here, if I hadn't married him?

DOT—(*to Mrs. J.*) And you swear that you married Jack?

MRS. J.—He was legally made my husband.

MOTHER—(*whining*) Tweedledum and Tweedledee. How are we going to get at the truth?

DOT—By insisting upon tangible proofs.

ROSE—I have none here, but if you had let me go, as I wanted to, I should have been back again by now, with marriage license and enough papers to convince you beyond a doubt of the right to my claim.

MRS. J.—(*Laughs scornfully*) I don't have to go outside to get my proofs, Miss Dorothy. (*Takes papers out of handbag.*) Here they are, marriage license,

signed by the Rev. John Morse of Stratford, and three witnesses. Here are letters received at the time, congratulating me on my marriage to Jack Follett. And here, (*taking off ring*) is the ring, on the inner side of which is engraved J. F. to R. D., and the date of our marriage. (*As she hands each thing out, Dot takes it and passes it to Mother, who gives each article a quick glance, sighs deeply, and passes each back to Dot.*) I really think you ought to be convinced now.

MOTHER—(*Wipes eyes.*) I am. There can be no mistake. You are my daughter.

ROSE—Don't judge hastily, Mrs. Follett. All these things that she shows you may be false. Anyone wishing to lay claim to Jack's fortune could have a wedding ring engraved—have papers forged—

MRS. J.—Take care, young woman. This country of yours may be a free country, free speech may be enjoyed, but there are limits to what you may say about an English woman. I am Jack's wife, and until you can prove otherwise, I insist upon my right of staying here and claiming his people's consideration.

ELISE—(*pushing in tea cart from R.*) *Is eet all settled? Which is Madame Jack?*

MOTHER—Oh, I don't know. My brain will burst—

ELISE—(*going to her with tea cup*) Ici, Madame, drink this and you will feel better. (*Returns to wagon. Gets another cup which she hands to Mrs. J.*) And, Madame. (*Passes another to Rose, and to Dot. Dot shakes her head in refusal as she paces up and down, nervously.*)

MRS. J.—(*making herself very much at home, stretching her legs away out and sipping noisily at tea*) This makes me think of the last hour I spent with Jack in England. We were having afternoon tea at my mother's home, and Jack was sitting quite close to me, his dear brown eyes filled with love—

ELISE—Ah?

MRS. J.—(*scowling*) What's the matter with you?

ELISE—Hees dear BROWN eyes? Did not Madame say hees eyes were blue?

MOTHER—Yes, you are right. My Jack had blue eyes.

ELISE—So! (*Gets cups from those who have finished drinking.*)

MRS. J.—They were brown when I married him. (*Phil snores. Dot nervous.*) No doubt they were blue when he left home, but the gunpowder changed their hue. That's only one of the many strange things that happened during the war. (*Phil snores again.*) As I was saying—

DOT—(*desperately*) Pardon me. I don't want to be rude, but I feel as though I'd blow up if you tell us anything more about Jack just now. I'm going to ask you to go to your room, Mrs. Jack, Rosalie, to yours. Elise, take Mother upstairs.

MOTHER—(*rising haughtily*) Will you explain yourself, Dorothy?

DOT—We can't go on like this, working in the dark. I'm going to get our lawyer on the job, and see if we can't settle this matter of Jack's wife on the spot.

MRS. J.—None too soon for me, I assure you. And I shall be most happy to retire to my room. (*Starts toward door.*)

ROSE—I'd like to telephone.

DOT—Go ahead.

ROSE—If I may be alone?

MOTHER—A five-minute nap may help restore my equilibrium. Never, never have I had such a wild day! Come, Elise.

ELISE—(*who has pushed tea wagon out of the way*) Yes, Madame. (*Exeunt R.*)

DOT—Go ahead and telephone, Rosalie. Don't mind me.

ROSE—(*Hesitates. Frowns. Suddenly decides. Shrugs her shoulders.*) I'll call up later. (*Exit R.*)

DOT—Thank heaven! (*Rushes to divan.*) Phil! Wake up! Wake up, Phil! (*Shakes him.*)

PHIL—Huh? (*Slowly waking.*)

DOT—How could you go to sleep like this? I've had the most nerve-racking half hour. GET UP.

PHIL—(*Draws himself to sitting position and stretches.*) Have I been asleep?

DOT—You sure have. And snoring like a hippopotamus. (*Phil starts to slip back on divan. Dot pulls at him.*) Oh, don't lie down again. You've got to get out, and then come back and tell mother who you are. When she learns that you are a real lawyer and that perhaps you can help us decide which of these girls is Jack's wife, she will forgive you everything.

PHIL—(*standing, drawing Dot to him*) Say, Dot, that's one grand idea. I'm to hear the evidence and decide which young lady is Jack's wife, and which is the imposter. Then I receive mother-in-law's blessing and we live happy forever and ever after.

DOT—You've got to get out first. That ought to be easy this time. I've sent the whole bunch to their rooms. (*Stops. Listens to sound off R. Motions to Phil to wait quietly, she tiptoes to R. Reaches exit.*) Why, Rosalie, what are you doing down stairs? (*Motions Phil behind her back to hide. Phil rushes to C. B., listens, and stops. Looks wildly around, and finally shoots into closet.*)

ROSE—(*off R.*) I couldn't rest, so I came down again.

DOT—(*Looks around and sighs with relief. Under her breath.*) He's got out at last, thank goodness! (*Aloud.*) Well, I'll leave you. (*Rose crosses to center.*) You wanted to telephone, didn't you? I'll be down soon, after I tidy up a bit. (*Exit R.*)

ROSE—(*Looks around. Waits a second. Way seems*

clear. *She goes to telephone.*) Bowling Green 2563. — Times-Ledger office? Will you call Mr. Colson to the phone, and tell him— (*Stops, listens, puts down receiver, but continues talking as though she were talking in the phone, while she tiptoes over to C. B. door.*) Tell him that there is a special piece of news for him— (*Pulls aside curtain or opens door, whichever there is, and Mrs. Jack tumbles in. Rose laughs scornfully.*) Dear Jack's wife—did you hurt yourself?

MRS. J.—(*Repeats bitter laugh.*) Ha, ha, ha! Oh, don't mention it. (*Brushes skirt.*)

ROSE—Listeners never hear well of themselves.

MRS. J.—I wasn't expecting to hear anything about myself.

ROSE—Who, then?

MRS. J.—About you.

ROSE—Just what do you mean?

MRS. J.—You are not the wife of my Jack. Who are you, then? That is what I would like to know.

ROSE—Quite a mystery—like yourself, eh?

MRS. J.—(*trying to assume friendly manner*) See here, why can't we come to some agreement, just between ourselves?

ROSE—(*mocking*) Agreement? Dear, dear me!

MRS. J.—I'm willing to pay you one hundred dollars if you'll get out and leave me the open field.

ROSE—Only one hundred dollars? And you get one hundred thousand dollars? Bid higher, my dear.

MRS. J.—You don't understand me. I pay you money, not to strengthen my claim, for no one can dispute my right to Jack's name and fortune, but to remove a contrasting element. Jack's folks like you better than they do me. As long as you remain here they will favor you. I need their affection and loyalty. Go, and the hundred dollars is yours.

ROSE—(*laughs*) This is too good to be true. Alas! Mrs. Jack, I must remain and demand the affection of MY husband's people.

MRS. J.—(*out of patience*) Oh, you snake, you toad, you who have no right here—

ROSE—(*laughing*) Like yourself—

MRS. J.—He who laughs last laughs best. I'll get you yet. I'll—

ROSE—(*haughtily*) Well, what will you do?

MRS. J.—(*very angry, goes up to her, her hands clenched*) I'll wring the laughter out of your throat, you vile imposter.

ROSE—(*looking defiantly into her face*) You wouldn't dare. I'm not afraid of your threats.

MRS. J.—You'd better be. (*Seizes her by shoulder.*)

ROSE—(*Tries to pull away.*) Take your hands off me—

ELISE—(*entering from R., eyes open with horror*) Madame Jack! (*Turns to one and then the other.*) Madame Jack, what ees the trouble? (*Mrs. J. drops her hands and walks away to L.*) You would not fall so low as to enjoy a cat fight?

MRS. J.—Oh, mind your own business. (*Tears off stage C. B.*)

ROSE—I suppose you saved my life, Elise, but for all that, you have interrupted a very interesting experience. If you can keep mum about it, all the better. (*Exit languidly R.*)

ELISE—(*watching them off thoughtfully*) So! Alas, it ees a very serious problem. And poor Madame, she has too much to worry her. Even zee burglar might yet bozz her. (*Looks at closet door knowingly, with a smile. She has brought in with her a pot of glue, made of paste used by paperhangers is easiest to handle. She cuts pieces of newspaper about size of fly paper, puts paste on each one with brush, hums loudly so as to let*

Phil know she is still in room, places papers near door on floor, so that when he comes out he will walk on papers; Then she goes to switch, and with smile, speaks for his benefit.) Ah, me, such a weary day this ees. I will now go to lie down for a rest. (*Turns lights off. Hides behind divan. Waits.*)

PHIL—(*Puts head out of closet door. Listens. Cautiously steps forward. Gets feet stuck on paper. Stumbles and nearly falls.*) What the dickens!

ELISE—(*pops up, turns on light*) How do you do, monsieur. At last I haf caught zee burglar!

PHIL—Say—what's the idea of this? (*Takes another step, stumbles again.*) Who put this flypaper on the floor?

ELISE—I did, Monsieur.

PHIL—Why?

ELISE—To catch zee wicked fly.

PHIL—Well, say, help me get it off.

ELISE—Oh, no, I could not do zat. You must wait till I get zee police, for you are a trespasser.

PHIL—You won't get any police for me, little one. I'm off. (*Starts for C. B.*)

ELISE—(*getting to door first*) Oh, no, no, no, you shall not go.

PHIL—Come—get out of the way. I don't want to hurt you, but—

ELISE—(*As he tries to pass, she throws her arms around his neck.*) Only over my dead body will you pass!

MOTHER—(*entering from R., stands aghast*) Elise! (*Phil and Elise whirl around facing her.*)

MOTHER—Can I believe my eyes? You, Elise, whom I was beginning to trust and love, hugging a strange man in my house. I AM surprised!

ELISE—Oh, Madame, you do not understand.

MOTHER—I do not care to understand. What I saw

was enough to convince me that your French blood renders you unsafe to be here in my house with my innocent daughter. You will have to leave at once.

PHIL—Oh, I say—

MOTHER—Silence! I want to hear nothing from you. I don't know who you are, and I don't care to know. Elise, pack your bag and go!

ELISE—(*wringing her hands*) Oh, it ees all a mees-take. If you will only let me explain.

MOTHER—Go! GO!

DOT—(*entering R.*) Mother, Elise, Ph—!

PHIL—Dorothy, help us out, will you?

MOTHER—Dorothy? Who are you who dare call my daughter by her first name? You scoundrel, who dare to come into my house, contaminating my little maid by holding her in your arms—

ELISE—Oh, Madame!

PHIL—But I—

DOT—Mother, are you speaking the truth? This—this man was hugging Elise?

MOTHER—That is what I saw as I entered (*Dot stiffens.*) They were in each other's arms, and Elise was threatening that if he deserted her she would kill herself. He is a villain, and she, a weak, easily led child.

DOT—(*to Phil*) Is this true?

PHIL—She had her arms around me, but—

DOT—(*haughtily*) That will do. It isn't likely that a girl will do ALL the hugging. Mother, the sooner this disgraceful pair leave the house, the better.

PHIL—Have a heart, Dot. You don't know what you're talking about. If you'll clear the room a minute, I'll explain.

DOT—Pardon me. (*Turns her back upon him.*)

ELISE—I will not go. Madame, you will not send me away.

MOTHER—You have disappointed me terribly, Elise, and you will have to go.

ELISE—But, madame, if you know the truth. He is my husband.

DOT—WHAT!

PHIL—WHAT!

MOTHER—Your husband?

ELISE—Yes, zat ees the truth. This young man and I have been married a long time. (*Shakes head at Phil not to protest.*) But I wanted to work some more, and zat is why I haf told nobody.

PHIL—Say, what's your game?

ELISE—(*Motions him again to silence.*) Madame would not blame me for kissing my own husband?

(*Phil turns in despair to speak to Dot, who refuses to listen to him. He goes down on his knees to plead with her, but she shakes her head "no," and finally walks off R., leaving him on his knees. He gets up, dusts off his knees, about the time the conversation between Mother and Elise is over.*)

MOTHER—But I cannot have the young man around the house.

ELISE—He will go when I say, Madame. He will leave in a very few minutes.

MOTHER—I'm glad it's settled anyway. Bid him farewell, and help me with supper.

ELISE—Yes, Madame.

(*Exit Mother R.*)

PHIL—(*turning to Elise*) Well, you've got me in a fine kettle of fish. Got the only girl I love in the world so mad she won't look at me cross-eyed. What's your game, young lady, tell me that?

ELISE—It ees a good game, monsieur, for you as well as for me. First, we will try to remove zee flypaper pads, yes? (*Business.*)

PHIL—(*when they are off*) Now, young lady, will you kindly tell me the meaning of all this tom-foolery? Why do you pass me off as your husband when I never laid eyes on you before?

ELISE—Zere are two reasons, two good reasons, monsieur. First, Madame, tell me to go. Because I do not wish to lose my good position here, because I'd die of grief if I would haf to bid my dear mistress adieu, I try to find an excuse for our embrace.

PHIL—But why not tell the truth?

ELISE—The truth? Monsieur, YOU wish to tell zee truth? You would tell how you are Monsieur Philip Haines?

PHIL—Hold on, there. How did you know that?

ELISE—By putting two and three together, and finding that they did not make thirteen. So, would you have me tell Madame that you are Philip, the man who wishes to marry her daughter, caught in the act of hugging her maid?

PHIL—Oh, the dickens!

ELISE—Quite impossible, you see zat.

PHIL—Then why didn't you say I was a burglar?

ELISE—Because I saw the mood you were in. I knew that you would seek to justify yourself, and you would strut up and say, "I am no burglar. I am Philip Haines." Zee fat would be in zee fire, and Madame would say to both you and me, "Be gone. Never let me look upon you again."

PHIL—But Elise, haven't you made matters worse, rather than better? Will she ever give her consent to my marrying Dorothy now? And will Dorothy ever speak to me again?

ELISE—Monsieur Phileep, I haf a plan, a very good plan, that will make all things come right. You will now go home and leave us.

PHIL—Not if I know it. I'm not going to stir from

this house till I have talked to Dot and explained this whole wretched affair.

ELISE—But, if—

PHIL—There's no IF about it. I am NOT going to leave this house without Dorothy's forgiveness. (*Strides over to divan.*) I'll wait, if I have to wait till doom's day. (*Slumps on to divan.*)

ELISE—Zen I will haf to change my own plans. I will first speak to Mamselle and explain why you are my dear husband.

PHIL—Ugh! (*Swings his feet up on divan, face toward audience.*)

ELISE—(*Laughs*) Zen you will run home after she kisses you, and you will come back as a lawyer, and tell the dear mama that you will settle all the difficulty.

PHIL—Elise, if you really want to do me a kindness, for goodness sake, send Dot in to me as soon as you can. Otherwise, I'll spill all the beans, and you'll find your job so lost to you that you won't be able to see it again with a microscope.

ELISE—(*Laughs.*) You are very funny. I cannot help laughing at you. But I will help you make your peace with Mamselle Dorothy aus si. (*Waves. Exit C. B.*)

PHIL—(*settling back on divan*) Not such a bad kid, but Lord, what a mess she's got me in!

ROSE—(*entering cautiously from R. with handbag, looks around. Goes to telephone. Phil watches her from divan, where he is unseen.*) Bowling Green 2563. Times-Ledger? Oh, Mr. Colson, how do you do?— Ooo, don't swear at ME. I've done the best I could. Someone interrupted me every time I tried to tell you—. Yes, it's a great story for the newspaper, make it two thousand words. I'll have it in by ten tonight.— Oh, I got in here all right. When I first arrived, Miss Dorothy took me for Jack's wife, and when I realized her mistake, I decided to play the game to the finish. It would give me

a chance to get the real inside facts of the case. Wait till the other newspapers read the story! Some scoop, I'll call it.— Yes, she's here. A rather disagreeable English girl. They don't care for her, but she intends to stick to them like a leech, and since she is Jack's choice, the old lady will forgive her anything. — I'm going to leave soon, but I want to get the inside facts of another story first. I think, but I want to make sure, that Philip Haines, the society millionaire, is mixed up in a scandal here. I'll know better later, but I'll hang around a while longer to make sure. If I'm not at the office by ten, look me up here, will you? (*All this time, Phil has been listening, making faces to show his interest, disgust, and decision regarding the young woman.*) Well, you know the reward I am going to demand. Until ten. Bye-bye. (*Puts down receiver. Laughs softly to self. Hears footsteps off C. B. Starts to run off R. Hears noise. She looks around anxiously, then hops into trunk. Pulls down cover.*)

(*Enter Dot from R. Stands at door. Looks around.*)

DOT—Phil?

(*Phil pops his head above divan. Motions her to keep still. She doesn't understand.*)

DOT—Phil, dear, Elise has told me all about the mix-up, and I understand—

(*Phil gesticulates to keep still.*)

DOT—(*wondering what's the matter with him*)
What's the matter?

(*Phil pantomimes that someone is in the trunk, to keep silence.*)

DOT—(*more puzzled, doesn't get the meaning of his gestures, and frowns*) Are you crazy?

(*Phil starts all over to tell about Rose by gesture so wildly that Dot has no idea what he means.*)

DOT—(*looking around in dazed fashion, getting angry*) I don't understand you in the least. Here I came to tell you—

(*More pantomime by Phil—"Don't say a word or the girl in the trunk will hear and send news to paper," etc., all in action. Not a word is spoken.*)

DOT—(*exasperated*) If you won't let me talk, I won't. But you'll have to wait some time before I humiliate myself again.

PHIL—(*more violently and desperately*) Sh-h!!

(*Dot, with toss of head, flounces off R.*)

(*Phil wipes forehead, wrings handkerchief, as though to show amount of moisture on his brow; sighs heavily. Listens. Hears voices off C. B. Drops back on divan.*)

MRS. J.—(*Entering from C. B. Has bag. Hat and coat on. Seems to be in hurry. Enters looking off back, frightened. Starts off R. Hears noise. Hurries to the trunk. Without looking, she starts to lift cover, face as though expecting someone to come in C. B. Rose snaps back cover of trunk. When Mrs. J. sees it is closed, she looks surprised, then glances around for place to hide. Starts for divan. Phil groans. She stops startled, looks around and finally dodges into closet, just as Elise rushes in C. B., all excited.*)

ELISE—Madame! Madame!!

MOTHER—(*off R.*) What's the matter? (*Enter from R. Mother and Dot.*)

DOT—What's the trouble about, now, Elise?

ELISE—The police!

MOTHER—(*getting excited*) Who? What? Where?

ELISE—Zee police! Zey wait out at zee door for someone.

MOTHER—Not any one here, surely. (*Whirls around as though looking for someone.*)

ELISE—Oui, Madame. Zey tell me all their story. A young woman who is a dangerous socialist or something like zat, had been deported and not allowed to enter zee United States for two years. But now she has got in

by making pretend she is Mrs. Jack Follett.

MOTHER—Elise, what are you saying!

DOT—Hush, Mother. Go on Elise.

ELISE—Zis young lady, she hear somehow or other that Mr. Jack Follett got married in England or France, and zen he die, and she have a make-believe certificate made out, and she call herself Mrs. Jack Follett, and zee officials on zee boat let her come into zee country without ever knowing that she is the wicked socialist that has been forbidden to come here.

DOT—Then that girl who has been masquerading around here as Jack's wife—

MOTHER— is a Nihilist, an anarchist, a Bolshevik,
a—

ELISE—She hope to hide here for several days until she can get away to her own hole in safety, where the police will not find her. But someone betray her and now they haf come to take her away.

MOTHER—Then let them take her before our names get in the papers, and we suffer the notoriety of having housed such a female.

ELISE—I haf told zee police to wait. We would deliver the woman in their hands.

DOT—Let's do so at once. Do you know where she is?

ELISE—We shall look, Mamselle.

PHIL—(*popping up from divan*) Wait a bit. I know all about HER. (*Dot is at first inclined to snub him. He grins at her. Comes forward to Mother.*) See here, you folks, (*all grouped C. front*) it is time for a man to take a hand in the game. What better man than a full-fledged lawyer—

MOTHER—Oh, are you a lawyer?

PHIL—Yes, Mrs. Follett. There's a lot of explaining to be done, that will have to come later. But I'd like to say off-hand that I'm not Elise's husband. I'm

Philip Haines, and I'm crazy about your daughter.

MOTHER—(*stiffly*) Mr. Haines!

PHIL—Make it Phil, do, please. —I'm awfully sorry for my part of the mix-up, and intend to do my best to help straighten out this whole affair. We can't keep the police waiting, so let's settle this matter about the female socialist at once. She is nearer than you think. (*Crosses room to closet door. All line up R. of closet, backs to the trunk.*) In here. (*He pulls door open. They all stretch to look in, no one in closet. Mrs. J. is supposed to have crept out while the group were gathered C. front, but in order to spring the surprise of her disappearance on the audience as well, she slips out back stage without appearing in room at all. Phil scratches his head.*) That's funny. It's uncanny. I saw the creature enter this closet not more than three minutes ago. Where is she now? (*Rose creeps out of trunk. Tiptoes to C. B. door. Listens, ready to slip out.*)

ELISE—(*stepping into closet*) Here is a hat.

DOT—(*reaching for it*) That's Rose's. I put it there myself. (*Holds it in hands behind her back.*)

ELISE—Are you sure she came in here, Monsieur?

PHIL—Of course I'm sure. She came in here with her hat and bag, having heard voices at the door. When Elise entered she hid in here. Where could she have gone to?

DOT—Most likely through the dining room, while we were all discussing her a little while ago.

MOTHER—I'm sure that's how she got away.

ELISE—(*Finds letter on floor*) What ees thees? A letter? Shall I read it Madame? (*Goes to C. front. All follow her, still no one noticing Rose. Dot, with hat held behind her. While letter is being read, Rose tiptoes forward and gets hat. Also has written note which she tosses into trunk.*)

MOTHER—Oh, do.

ELISE—(*Reads.*) "To all those interested: I, Vera Valeska, used the name of Mrs. Jack Follett in order to get into the United States. I meant no one any harm. Merely wished to escape the officials who had forbidden my return to this country. Thanks for a very pleasant afternoon. Vera Valeska, alias Jack's wife."

(*At close of reading, Rose has tossed her letter into trunk, put down cover, and with a merry wave of her hand, tiptoes out C. B.*)

MOTHER—Well, I'm glad we've got out of this so easy. She might have planted a bomb here and blown us all to Jericho.

(*All disperse about the room.*)

DOT—And I was right about Jack's wife. Rosalie is the one.

MOTHER—We must tell her so at once. Poor dear girl, how badly she must be feeling over our doubting her.

PHIL—You'd better ask her a few questions first before apologizing, Mrs. Follett. There are some very much in need of answering.

DOT—Where is she? Does anyone know?

PHIL—This is where I have better luck. I happen to know exactly where the lady is. (*Swells his chest, strides to trunk, takes hold of cover.*) Behold. (*Pulls up cover. No one inside. He falls back, holding his head.*) Am I going mad?

DOT—There's no one here. Phil, you must be sick.

ELISE—(*bending over, and pulling out the letter*) Ah, once again, zee leetle letter. Shall I read?

PHIL—(*disgusted*) Go ahead!

ELISE—(*Reads.*) "I, Jane Hemingway, used the name of Mrs. Jack Follett in order to gain admittance into your home. I meant you no harm. Merely wished to obtain a good story for my newspaper. Thanks for a very pleasant afternoon. Jane Hemingway, alias Jack's

wife."

MOTHER—Now, the whole thing will be in the papers—how we have been duped by two adventuresses,—and we shall be the laughing stock of the whole city.

DOT—Mother dear, don't feel so badly. Phil will call up the editors, and forbid them to put the story in, won't you, Phil?

MOTHER—But that isn't all. I had my heart set on having a new daughter. I wanted Jack's wife to live here with me, and now there isn't any Jack's wife at all. *(Sobs loudly.)*

PHIL—You are wrong there, Mrs. Follett. Just before Jack died, he wrote me a letter telling me about his marriage, and his wife. He also said that he was writing to you, a letter that must have been lost.

DOT—Why didn't you tell us of this before?

PHIL—I have been looking for the wife ever since, although waiting to see if she would come to you herself. Until today I have failed in my search.

MOTHER—Until today? Then you mean you have found her?

PHIL—I suppose I failed in finding her because I have been looking in the wrong sort of places. Although she did anything from washing floors to caring and praying for the dead, during the war, I knew that she came from a very fine aristocratic family, and have been searching among the rich for her. I had her picture—and so can identify her—

DOT—Oh, say it quick, Phil, where is she?

PHIL—*(stepping aside and bowing to Elise)* Allow me—

MOTHER AND DOT—Elise!

MOTHER—You are Jack's wife?

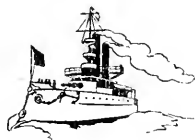
ELISE—*(holding out hands pleading)* Oui, ma petite mere, Jack's wife.



MOTHER—Oh, my dear! (*They embrace.*)

(*Phil, who is standing L. of Mother, winks at Dot, R. of Mother, and beckons her to come to him. She smiles and goes to him. They embrace. Mother still holds Elise in her arms, cooing over her.*)

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